

Comment Letter AL069

AL069



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT
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August 27, 2004

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Executive Director
California High Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, Suite 1425
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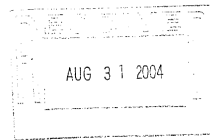
Dear Mr. Morshed:

We are pleased to present you with our comments on the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the proposed California High-Speed Train system. This document marks a historic milestone for the State of California in creating a new transportation system to serve the public. Consistent with the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District's (BART) comments herein, we support the continued development of an integrated, world-class multi-modal transportation system for the Bay Area and the State of California.

The California High-Speed Train (HST) system proposed in the Draft Program EIR/EIS would connect the cities of San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose, and other Bay Area cities with the state's other large population centers, including Los Angeles, San Diego, Sacramento, and Fresno. Such a system would be beneficial for increasing ridership on BART given that the two systems connect at common stations. We gladly note the importance given to connectivity between the HST and BART as presented in the Draft Program EIR/EIS. In addition to the ridership benefits of connectivity between the two systems, transit-oriented development would be encouraged even more with the presence of both BART and HST at a station.

Our comments on the Draft Program EIR/EIS are presented below in page order except for the first comment that is general in nature. They are given to you in the spirit of improving this document and, ultimately, to improve the HST system and the transportation system in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Since this document is a Draft Program EIR/EIS, we recognize that additional analyses of environmental impacts and mitigation measures will be provided in one or more future project-level EIRs. However, while a programmatic environmental document can defer consideration of issues that cannot feasibly be reviewed at the program level, deferring impact analysis is permitted only where subsequent project-level activities will be examined to determine whether additional analysis is required for impacts not examined at the program level. See CEQA Guidelines sections 15152, 15168. As discussed in the comments below,



BART agrees with the approach taken in the HST Draft Program EIR/EIS to defer analysis of certain impacts until a specific project is proposed, such as effects on existing transit parking and project-generated traffic impacts (pp. 3.1-8, 24). However, the explicit identification of these impacts for project-level analysis appears to suggest that other impacts will not be considered. In particular, other potentially significant impacts of concern to BART, such as effects on existing transit ridership, are not identified as intended for analysis in a Project EIR. Accordingly, we ask that the Final Program EIS/EIR either clarify that each of the issues discussed in our comments below will be analyzed at the project level, or address them at the program level.

Airport Access

On pages 2-13 through 2-16 in the discussion of the No Project Alternative, no mention is made of projects that will significantly improve airport access. For example, two separate projects will facilitate airport access in the Bay Area in the coming years. The Oakland Airport Connector project will provide direct rail service between the Oakland Coliseum BART Station and the Oakland International Airport with revenue service planned for 2010. The Capitol Corridor Intercity passenger rail service will also have a station adjacent to the Oakland Coliseum BART Station. In addition, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is proposing an automated people mover to provide service between the San Jose International Airport and the Santa Clara Caltrain Station that is also the site of a proposed BART station. Both projects meet the criteria as laid out on page 2-13 anticipating improvements that would be in place by 2020. Both projects will significantly increase access to the Bay Area's other two airports in much the same way the BART extension to San Francisco International Airport has already demonstrated.

Warm Springs Station

On page 2-50, the Draft Program EIR/EIS states that a HST station at Warm Springs would "include the need to relocate the planned BART station to the east and construct the high-speed rail station and facilities between two active railroads, BART and UPRR." This need to relocate the planned Warm Springs BART Station and the difficulty of doing it while BART is under operating conditions are presented as reasons for eliminating this potential station location. The BART Warm Springs Extension (WSX) alignment in the vicinity of the planned Warm Springs Station is to the east of the eastern-most UPRR tracks (formerly the Western Pacific Railroad). Additionally, VTA has purchased the eastern-most UPRR railroad right-of-way in this vicinity. Please reconsider the analysis of a potential HST station at Warm Springs while accurately considering the planned WSX alignment and active UPRR alignment in this area. For reference, please see the [Supplemental Environmental Impact Report, BART Warm Springs Extension](#), June 2003, which we can provide to you.

Peninsula Alignment

On page 2-51 is found the statement, "For HST service on the San Francisco Peninsula, sharing track with Caltrain is the only realistic alternative for a direct line to San Francisco because of the lack of sufficient available right-of-way along the Peninsula and the high cost of acquiring additional right-of-way." The document does not discuss any possible impacts on BART tracks, systems or stations along the proposed HST alignment. Nor does the document discuss whether the use of the Caltrain right-of-way would prevent a possible

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Comment Letter AL069 Continued

extension of BART south of the Millbrae Station. While BART as an agency has no plans for such an extension, the concept has been proposed at various times by elected officials from San Mateo County.

Warm Springs Alignment

On page 2-52, the Hayward Line to I-880 (Hayward Alignment/I-880) is one of two alignment options in the San Jose-to-Oakland segment that are proposed to be carried forward. The Hayward Alignment/I-880 requires a tunnel under Lake Elizabeth in Central Park of the City of Fremont. BART is currently preparing contract documents for the WSX project, which also tunnels underneath Lake Elizabeth and the active UPRR line, then heads south along the former Western Pacific Railroad line. The Hayward Alignment/I-880 under Lake Elizabeth and to I-880 is not fully described. Please clarify if the Hayward Alignment/I-880 as it proceeds south of Lake Elizabeth to I-880 would parallel the proposed BART WSX, and how far away it would be? Would there be construction or permanent impacts to the existing and planned rail lines? These issues need to be fully analyzed in the Project EIR/EIS and the Program document should recognize this need.

Ridership Impacts

On page 3.1-1, the statement appears that under the California Environmental Quality Act a proposed project should be analyzed for the potential effects of various impacts including to rail. Yet, the potential benefits and impacts of access to HST provided by rail transit are not mentioned in the Draft Program EIR/EIS, other than parking impacts (see below). For example, the extent to which existing Peninsula rail passengers (either Caltrain or BART) will migrate to the HST is not addressed. How many of these passengers will now bypass both Caltrain and BART in favor of the HST? The same question arises for HST service on the East Bay between San Jose and Oakland with the potential for BART passengers switching to the HST.

Parking Impacts

On page 3.1-8 is the following paragraph relating to traffic and circulation issues for the existing conditions compared to the No Project Alternative;

“Even though there is sufficient parking planned for the HST stations, one of the greatest effects that HST could have on the existing transit system would be the potential use of existing transit parking facilities by HST passengers. At all Caltrain stations other than the Millbrae Station, and at affected San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) stations such as West Oakland, 12th Street, Coliseum, and Union City in the East Bay, there is sufficient parking under existing conditions. In downtown San Francisco and Oakland, as well as at the three major airports, there currently is no excess parking. Parking conditions at these locations are expected to remain the same or improve under the No Project Alternative because Caltrain and BART capital expansion programs include parking expansions and the programs are likely to continue to adjust to market demands. However, HST riders could potentially use existing transit parking facilities, resulting in parking impacts.”

While it is true that BART will make adjustments in providing access to our stations to meet future market demands, we do not have a specific capital program to expand parking capacity at our existing stations. Proposed BART extensions do include parking facilities but only to meet the needs of the specific project. It also should be noted that BART does not have parking facilities at the Oakland City Center-12th Station. Please note that the West Oakland BART Station is one of the most popular park-and-ride stations in the BART system and does not meet the existing demand for parking. According to a May 2004 survey, the non-fee spaces in the West Oakland parking lot filled at 5:45 a.m.

We want to reinforce the statement above that one of the greatest effects that HST service could have on existing transit systems is the use of existing transit parking facilities by HST passengers. This impact would be not only at common stations to the BART and HST systems but also at other BART stations where riders park and use BART to access the HST. Such a parking analysis of all BART stations was performed by Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority in the [BART Extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report \(EIS/EIR\) & Draft 4\(f\) Evaluation of March 2004](#). Given that this EIR/EIS is at a program level and specific forecasted ridership estimates are not presented, we do not know the level of significance of this impact. The Program EIR/EIS should consistently commit to analyzing the impacts on existing transit parking facilities by HST passengers yet the statement on page 3.1-15, quoted below, suggests that the HST Alternative will not have an impact on rail transit service.

Core System Impacts

On page 3.1-15 in a discussion of Transit, Goods Movement, and Parking, the Draft Program EIR/EIS states, “The HST Alternative is not projected to have any potential impact on public transit conditions compared to the No Project Alternative.” The HST Alternative, however, does anticipate a range between 15.2 and 33.2 million annual trips to San Francisco. This range excludes trips from San Joaquin Valley cities because their destinations are not distinguished between Los Angeles and San Francisco as presented in the document. An influx of this magnitude onto the Bay Area transit system, including BART, would require additional analysis in terms of its effect on capacity and access to the system. The potential parking impacts at BART stations not connected to the HST system are already noted above. Other BART facilities in addition to our parking supply could potentially be affected by the increased ridership from the HST. The passenger loads on station platforms, the safety of vertical circulation elements through our stations, passenger crowding on our trains and other system components could be affected by HST ridership in the future. As BART plans for future riders, analysis has indicated that given forecasted growth to 2025, the capacity of the BART overall system will need to be upgraded to maintain BART standards for operational performance and passenger safety.

Rail Transit Access

On page 3.1-24 under Mitigation Strategies, is found the statement, “Consultation and coordination with public transit services in order to encourage the provision of adequate bus feeder routes to serve proposed station areas could mitigate potential transit impacts.” The provision of rail transit services could mitigate potential impacts of HST service and is missing from this statement.

Comment Letter AL069 Continued

BART Connection at Diridon

On page 3.2-37 is text on the implications of splitting the HST route in San Jose to serve both San Francisco and Oakland. It states, "However, if only one side of the Bay were directly served by the proposed HST system, the number of intermodal connections would be greatly reduced." Later in the paragraph it states, "Potential HST passengers from the East Bay would have to either use the Capitol Corridor, mass transit, or drive to San Francisco, San Jose, or the Peninsula to use the HST service."

BART is supportive of the East Bay alignment given the various possible intermodal connections between the HST and the BART system. However, mention should be made of the proposed Silicon Valley Rapid Transit Project because it includes a BART station at the Diridon Station in San Jose where HST would also have a station. A description of this proposed BART station is contained in the BART Extension to Milpitas, San Jose and Santa Clara Draft EIS/EIR.

Transbay Terminal Connection

On page 3.2-38 is a discussion of a HST station at the proposed new Transbay Terminal Station in San Francisco. It states, "In addition, the Transbay Terminal would serve as the transit hub for all of the major services to downtown San Francisco, with the advantage of direct connections to BART and Muni." Unfortunately, there is no direct connection between BART and the Transbay Terminal as it is presently designed. BART is located one city block away from the current and future Transbay Terminal. The proposed new Transbay Terminal does include an unfunded plan to have an underground moving sidewalk to connect to the Embarcadero BART Station.

Thank you for the opportunity to present comments of the Draft Program EIR/EIS for the proposed HST system. We are excited by the prospect of the California High Speed Rail Authority developing a new statewide rail system to meet the needs of California citizens in the twenty-first century. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Malcolm Quint at 510-464-7677 should you have any questions or concerns about the comments made in this letter.

Sincerely,


Thomas E. Margro
General Manager

cc: Board Appointed Officers

Response to Comments of Thomas E. Margro, General Manager, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART), August 31, 2004 (Letter AL069)

AL069

Please see responses to Comment Letter AL053 (this is a repeated comment letter).

Comment Letter AL070

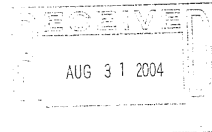
Aug 31 04 08:19a city of burbank trans plg 818 238-5254 AL070 p.2



CITY OF BURBANK
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
275 East Olive Avenue, P.O. Box 6459, Burbank, California 91510-6459
www.ci.burbank.ca.us

August 31, 2004

California High Speed Rail Authority
Attn: California High-Speed Train
Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814



Dear Authority Board Members,

Thank you for the opportunity for the City of Burbank to comment on the Draft Program EIR/EIS for the proposed high speed rail project. As all of the proposed alignments would pass through the City of Burbank, we would like to submit the following comments on the draft report:

- We would like to recommend the "Combined UPRR/Metrolink & I-5 Alignment" be removed from consideration due to its high impacts on established residential neighborhoods and its high visual, aesthetic, and noise impacts due to the use of a 50-60 ft high elevated structure over existing freeway overpasses as the line passes through Burbank, between Buena Vista Street and the southern city limits.
- We request that the Authority address and review the current and future ADT counts reported on Burbank arterials in the "Bakersfield-to-Los Angeles Traffic, Transit, Circulation, and Parking" Technical Evaluation for both Burbank stations. The E and F Levels of Service shown on Figure 4.1-5 and 4.1-6, with the possible exception of Hollywood Way, do not represent current conditions as shown by current traffic counts. Based upon these inflated base conditions, the future, without project conditions shown in the station analysis for both stations are considerably higher than the City's traffic model predicts. For future baseline (2020) programmed improvements to the highway network within one mile of either Burbank Station options, the report fails to include the I-5 HOV project, included on the California State Transportation Improvement Program.
- We request that any traffic analysis of future stations be done in close concert with city staff to ensure that traffic impacts at proposed stations satisfy the city's traffic impact guidelines, and ensure that access improvements are planned to minimize impacts to local streets.
- If the Burbank Downtown Station is selected as the preferred alternative, we

AL070-1

AL070-2

AL070-3

ADMINISTRATION 818.238.5176	✦	BUILDING 818.238.5220	✦	HOUSING & GRANTS 818.238.5160	✦	LICENSE & CODE SERVICES 818.238.5280
PLANNING 818.238.5250	✦	REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY 818.238.5180	✦	TRANSPORTATION 818.238.5270	✦	WORKFORCE CONNECTION 818.238.5280

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CITY OF BURBANK
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
275 East Olive Avenue, P.O. Box 6459, Burbank, California 91510-6459
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would request that station designs emphasize and encourage pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections to the City Center and existing transit facilities. If the Burbank Airport Station is selected as the preferred alternative, we would request future station studies develop methods to connect to Burbank Airport, the existing Metrolink Station, and any other future transit stations that may be developed.

AL070-3
cont.

- We request that future studies of noise and vibration mitigate all "high" or "medium" impacts to "low" impacts, especially adjacent to residential neighborhoods, schools, parks and sensitive commercial businesses (such as sound recording studios, etc).

AL070-4

- As you may be aware, there is an extensive widening and HOV project in design for interstate 5 through the San Fernando Valley. As part of this project, a grade separation of the UPRR/Metrolink tracks at the Buena Vista Street grade crossing is planned, as well as a new street crossing and grade separation proposed south of Buena Vista. It does not appear that the UPRR/Metrolink Alignment alternative takes this project into consideration. The "Alignment Configurations and Cross Sections Report" included in the "Statewide Technical Reports" shows this alignment option to be built at grade at these locations, which appears to be in conflict with the Interstate 5 widening project designs.

AL070-5

- We request the EIR/EIS include a more detailed description of the alignment characteristics through Burbank as it progresses from trench (outside of Burbank) to at-grade, to aerial, and back to at-grade under both alternatives. These alignment changes are closely spaced in one of the most constrained portions of the entire rail corridor, and must accommodate a number of existing structures. The alignment descriptions in the technical appendices are not clear exactly how this is accomplished within existing constraints.

AL070-6

Thank you again for allowing the opportunity to comment on the Draft Program EIR/EIS for the High Speed Rail Project. If you have any questions or require clarification please do not hesitate to contact our city's Transportation Division Staff at 818.238.5270 or via email at dkriske@ci.burbank.ca.us.

Sincerely,

David L. Kriske
Transportation Analyst
City of Burbank Community Development Department

ADMINISTRATION 818.238.5176	✦	BUILDING 818.238.5220	✦	HOUSING & GRANTS 818.238.5160	✦	LICENSE & CODE SERVICES 818.238.5280
PLANNING 818.238.5250	✦	REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY 818.238.5180	✦	TRANSPORTATION 818.238.5270	✦	WORKFORCE CONNECTION 818.238.5280

Response to Comments of David L. Kriske, Transportation Analyst, City of Burbank, Community Development Department, August 31, 2004 (Letter AL070)

AL070-1

Acknowledged. The Authority has identified the MTA/Metrolink option as preferred HST between Sylmar and Los Angeles. Between Burbank and Los Angeles Union Station, the MTA/Metrolink refers to a relatively wide corridor within which alignment variations will be studied at the project level. Please also see Chapter 6A of the Final Program EIR/EIS.

AL070-2

The Final Program EIR/EIS has identified the Burbank Metrolink/Media City Station as the preferred HST station site to serve the Burbank/northern Los Angeles basin area. The Program EIR/EIS traffic analysis was completed at a regional level of detail based on regional modeling data. Should the HST program move forward, site-specific intersection traffic analysis will be included as part of subsequent project level studies, along with consideration of available ADT (average daily traffic) counts. Should the HST proposal move forward, the Authority would work closely with the City of Burbank and other stakeholders in reviewing potential traffic impacts and access improvements.

AL070-3

Acknowledged. The Authority has identified the Burbank Downtown Station site as the preferred station location for a potential HST station to serve the Burbank/Glendale area. Please also see standard response 2.1.12 in regards to transit oriented development around station areas.

AL070-4

Specific noise impacts and mitigation measures would be identified related to specific alignment locations, train speeds, service levels,

operating hours, ambient noise levels, and other specific information regarding sensitive receptors, as part of the subsequent project level environmental review.

AL070-5

The MTA/Metrolink option is conceptually designed to be at-grade through the proposed I-5 grade separation with Metrolink infrastructure. Modifications to the grade separation as currently designed may be required to accommodate the HST tracks. The HST alignment has been designed at a conceptual level of detail. Should the HST program move forward preliminary engineering design will be required as part of future project specific analysis. Additional design options (including different concepts for crossing the Interstate 5) would be included as part of future studies. Should the HST proposal move forward, the Authority and the FRA will continue to work with the City of Burbank, SCRRA, Caltrans, and other stakeholders to address issues surrounding all aspects of freeway crossings and grade separations in the more detailed project specific studies that will be required.

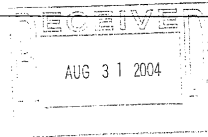
AL070-6

The co-lead agencies acknowledge the constraints along this portion of the alignment. For the program level studies The HST alignment has been designed at a conceptual level of detail. Should the HST program move forward preliminary engineering design will be required as part of future project specific analysis. During a subsequent process, the Authority and the FRA will continue to work with the City of Burbank, SCRRA, Caltrans, and other stakeholders to address issues surrounding all aspects of the alignment options through the City of Burbank in the more detailed project specific studies that will be required.

Comment Letter AL071

AL071

City of
FRESNO
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
OFFICES OF THE FRESNO CITY COUNCIL
2600 FRESNO STREET
FRESNO CA 93721-3616
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CITY OF FRESNO



Ms. Carrie Pouvahidi
July 30, 2004
Page 2

July 30, 2004

Ms. Carrie Pourvahidi
Deputy Director,
California High Speed Rail Authority
925 "L" Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Pourvahidi:

SUBJECT: CITY OF FRESNO RESPONSE TO EIR/EIS FOR
CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL PROJECT – 2004

The City of Fresno wishes to thank the High Speed Rail Board for the opportunity to review the EIR/EIS for the proposed High Speed Rail project in California. The City of Fresno has been actively involved in evaluating this project over the past several years and believes that the High Speed Rail Project is of vital importance to City of Fresno, the San Joaquin Valley, and California. Creating a high-speed connection to other parts of the state is paramount in moving people, improving air quality, while creating jobs and improving our economy.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

- The City of Fresno fully supports the High Speed Rail Project and recommends that it be completed and that upon initial bonding/financing, the Central Valley Connection be the first segment completed since its construction is not as complex or costly.
- We concur with the recommendation to locate a downtown station at the southwest corner of Tulare and "H" Streets. In fact, the City of Fresno has already moved forward with land acquisition and pre-planning of a downtown site that will act as both an HSR station and a multi-modal connection to public transit, taxi services, pedestrian and bike paths, and significant parking services.
- The City of Fresno recommends that the High Speed Rail Authority continue to allocate the \$780 million toward the construction of a new "loop track," west of Fresno as originally proposed, and that this loop would then be used to relocate BNSF trains away from Downtown and rest of our city.
- It should be noted that the City of Fresno supports the goals of the cities of Selma, Fowler, and Kingsburg not to have the High Speed Rail alignment located through their cities. We agree that constructing a bypass loop around these cities is a viable alternative and should be evaluated further. We also believe that any additional costs associated with this option ultimately be included in the HSR financing.

2.6.2 CONCEPTUAL PLAN

The City of Fresno recommends that all "Express" trains make, at a minimum, five daily stops in Fresno. Fresno is the central point of the San Joaquin Valley, making it an easy commute (maximum 1 ½ hours) from other Valley locations. The inclusion of Express service into Fresno would only increase travel times by ten (10) minutes or less, which is still sufficient to provide a travel time of less than three hours between from San Francisco and Los Angeles.

AL071-6

2.6.9 ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT AND STATION OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN SCREENING EVALUATION

San Jose to Merced Alignment

The City of Fresno recommends the Pacheco Pass alignment – Gilroy Connection. As mentioned on page 2-54, this connection serves the most of the South Bay area, including Gilroy and Monterey/Salinas, both of which are high tourist destinations. Additionally, this route appears to be least restrictive for construction and helps ensure a reliable connection to and from the San Joaquin Valley.

AL071-7

Fresno to Tulare Alignment

The City of Fresno concurs with the deletion of the potential alignments and subsequent station locations removed from consideration as outlined on page 2-60 (Fresno to Tulare) in that these other alignments would not have benefited the city of Fresno.

Furthermore, we concur with the conclusion outlined on page 2-65 that recommends the site located at the southwest corner of Tulare and "H" Streets and that north bound trains enter the city utilizing the UPRR alignment. With regard to trains entering from the south, we can support either the BNSF or the UPRR alignments as both enter our city at approximately the same location and neither would affect our ability to service our citizens.

AL071-8

As previously stated, we strongly believe that the UPRR corridor through Fresno will jointly meet the goals and operational needs of the High Speed Rail Authority and our region given its proximity to other transportation corridors and Downtown Fresno. We also believe that further consideration of a new "loop" system and station location west of Fresno fails to recognize the regional significance of our community and the role that we play in the success of HSR.

Although we strongly recommend the use of the UPRR alignment, we also realize this corridor is not wide enough to adequately accommodate HSR, UPRR, and the relocation of BNSF trains. As you are aware, the issue of rail consolidation is a major concern for our community that needs to be addressed. Therefore, we have developed what we believe to be an innovative plan that would collectively meet the needs of the HSR while addressing the issue of rail consolidation.

Comment Letter AL071 Continued

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Page 3

The City of Fresno recommends that the High Speed Rail Authority continue to allocate the \$780 million towards the construction of a new "loop track" west of Fresno as originally proposed, except that this new loop would be used to relocate BNSF trains away from Downtown and rest of our city. In fact, we believe that such an option may actually reduce the overall project cost since it would be constructed to standards commensurate with freight service (e.g., grade crossing costs). The additional funding made available through this strategy could then be reallocated to enhance and support the construction of sound walls and grade separations along the UPRR alignment.

2.6.10 MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE FACILITIES

Subsection B, referenced as the "Sacramento to Bakersfield" connection, recommends only two locations for HSR maintenance and storage facilities. We take exception to this recommendation, and request that the Board consider locating the proposed maintenance and storage facility in Fresno.

Fresno is located in the center of the San Joaquin Valley and is the logical choice for these facilities. There is affordable land available located in the south of the city or at our new Roeding Business Park area just north of Freeway 180, east of Freeway 99. The Roeding Business Park is located within close proximity to the UPRR alignment and Chandler Executive Airport which could be used to provide logistical support, such as the delivery of parts and/or equipment. Additional air cargo services are available at Fresno Yosemite International Airport and can be easily accessed via Freeways 168, 180, and 99. Additional logistical support could be acquired through the use of an existing rail corridor located just north of the Downtown Station. Our Economic Development Unit is prepared to work with the Board in locating this facility in Fresno.

3.4 NOISE AND VIBRATION

3.4.1 Regulatory Requirements and Methods of Evaluation Pages 3,4,6-7 Cost and Benefits of a High Speed Bypass Loop

The City of Fresno concurs with the results of the evaluation for the bypass loop and its relation to noise levels. As indicated, the impact reduction from 16% of population (no loop) to 12% of population (with loop) and the related costs does not justify such an expense. Again, the City supports a HSR corridor through Downtown that incorporates improved sound wall protection and no "at grade crossings" through town. We also believe additional savings can be achieved by constructing a new loop system that would meet the standards needed to accommodate the freight operations and the relocation of the BNSF trains.

CONCLUSION

The City of Fresno respectfully requests that all the issues raised in our response be addressed and incorporated into the final implementation plan for this project. Fresno is a growing community, both in numbers and political stature, within California and believe that we share a common vision of

Ms. Carrie Pouvahidi
July 30, 2004
Page 4

economic development, job creation, and improved air quality. The City of Fresno supports this effort, and we envision a time that such High Speed Trains are providing our communities and State with world class transportation that is safe, clean, and efficient.

Responses to the City of Fresno Review of the EIR/EIS should be sent to the following:

Bob Madewell
Transportation Affairs Manager
2600 Fresno Street, 4th Floor
Fresno, California 93721

Sincerely,

Alan Autry,
Fresno City Mayor

Brad Castillo,
Fresno City Council President

c: Brian Calhoun, Council Member/District 2
COFCG Rail Committee Representative
Jon Ruiz, Assistant City Manager
Nick Yovino, Planning and Development Director
Mike Kim, Interim Public Works Director
Bruce A. Rudd, Director of Transportation/Fresno Area Express
Fred Burkhardt, Economic Development Director
Bob Madewell, Transportation Affairs Manager
Tom Bailey, Fresno Area Residents for Rail Consolidation

Response to Comments of Alan Autry, Mayor and Brad Castillo, City Council President, City of Fresno, August 31, 2004 (Letter AL071)

AL071-1

Acknowledged.

AL071-2

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 10.1.7.

AL071-3

Acknowledged. The Authority has also identified the Downtown Fresno site as the preferred station location for a potential HST station to serve Fresno County.

AL071-4

Acknowledged. Allocation of funding is beyond the scope of this program level environmental process. Investigation of a new "loop line" for conventional freight services is beyond the scope of this program EIR/EIS process.

AL071-5

Acknowledged. The Authority has identified the BNSF alignment as the preferred alignment between Fresno (outside the urban area) to Bakersfield. Please see standard response 6.15.4.

AL071-6

Acknowledged. The determination of an operational plan for the HST system is beyond the scope of this program EIR/EIS. Should the HST proposal move forward, more detailed operations analysis will be undertaken. The operational plan used to develop the ridership and revenue forecasts assumed about 12 (in each direction) "skip stop" express trains stopping in Fresno (see Authority's June 2000 Business Plan page 59 for details).

AL071-7

Please see standard response 6.3.1.

AL071-8

Acknowledged. The Authority has identified the BNSF alignment as the preferred alignment between Fresno (outside the urban area) and Bakersfield. Please see standard response 6.15.4. The Authority has identified the UPRR alignment (without an express loop) as the preferred HST alignment through the Fresno urban area. The Authority has also identified the Downtown Fresno site as the preferred station location for a potential HST station to serve Fresno County. Allocation of funding is beyond the scope of this program level environmental process. Investigation of a new "loop line" for conventional freight services is beyond the scope of this program EIR/EIS process.

AL071-9

Please see standard response 2.35.1.

AL071-10

Acknowledged. See standard response 6.20.5.